

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8285

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, LI
SUBJECT: QUESTION REGARDING LIBERIA AT DEPARTMENT OF STATE
PRESS BRIEFING FEBRUARY 24

REF: STATE 48869

1. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN WAS ASKED AT THE FEB. 24 PRESS
BRIEFING "ARE WE OPPOSED TO THE RACIAL SEGREGATION THAT IS
WRITTEN INTO THE LIBERIAN CONSTITUTION?"

2. ARTICLE 5, SECTION 13, OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA READS "NONE BUT NEGROES, OR PERSONS
OF NEGRO DESCENT, SHALL BE ELIGIBLE TO CITIZENSHIP IN
THIS REPUBLIC."

3. THIS ARTICLE IS A 1907 AMENDMENT OF THE ORIGINAL
SECTION 13 WHICH READ "THE GREAT HOPE OF FORMING THESE
COLONIES BEING TO PROVIDE A HOME FOR THE DISPERSED
AND OPPRESSED CHILDREN OF AFRICA...NONE BUT PERSONS OF
COLOR SHALL BE ADMITTED TO CITIZENSHIP."

4. IN COMMENTING ON THIS PROVISION OF THE LIBERIAN CONSTI-
TUTION IT MIGHT BE NOTED THAT STATE OF LIBERIA CAME INTO
BEING AS A HAVEN FOR BLACK FREEDMEN FROM NORTH AMERICA,
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PARTICULARLY BLACK AMERICANS FROM THE U.S. INASMUCH AS
LIBERIA WAS CONCEIVED AND ESTABLISHED PARTLY BECAUSE OF
INHOSPITABLE CONDITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, LIBERIANS
MIGHT JUSTIFIABLY POINT TO THE IRONY OF
CRITICISM OF THIS RESTRICTION ON CITIZENSHIP, ESPECIALLY
FROM A U.S. SOURCE. ("PERSONS OF NEGRO DESCENT"
HAS BEEN DEFINED BY THE GOL TO MEAN AT LEAST ONE-QUARTER

NEGRO ANCESTRY.)

5. THERE IS OF COURSE NO "RACIAL SEGREGATION" IN LIBERIA.
FOR EXAMPLE, THOUGH NOT PERMITTED TO BECOME CITIZENS, MANY
THOUSANDS OF LEBANESE HAVE SETTLED IN LIBERIA OVER THE YEARS AND
COMPOSE A SUBSTANTIAL AND PROSPEROUS SEGMENT OF THE
COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY.
CARTER

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NNN

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